

Statement on Initiatives To Empower Young People

January 11, 2000

I am pleased to announce today that my budget for Fiscal Year 2001 will include over \$850 million for the Corporation for National Service. The investments in my budget will keep us on track to my goal of 100,000 AmeriCorps members serving annually. They will also fund several innovative initiatives to empower young people. Through a new AmeriCorps Reserves program, modeled on the military reserves, we will be able to engage former AmeriCorps members in service during times of crisis. Through a new Community Coaches program, we will place dedicated adults in 1,000 schools who can guide students in effective service and connect the school to the wider community. And through the Youth Empowerment grants I am proposing, we will be able to reward social entrepreneurship among young people who are finding their own solutions to problems like youth violence and civic alienation.

Everyone who serves is a catalyst for change. Since the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act, more than 150,000 young people have served in AmeriCorps. They represent our very best ideals—they have helped to immunize more than a million people; taught, tutored, or mentored 4.4 million children; helped build some 11,000 homes; and truly sparked a new spirit of public engagement across the land. The initiatives I am announcing today will help more Americans share in the power and promise of community service. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure their enactment.

Statement Announcing Assistance to Colombia's Counterdrug Efforts

January 11, 2000

Today I am announcing an urgently needed, 2-year funding package to assist Colombia in vital counterdrug efforts aimed at keeping illegal drugs off our shores. It will also help Colombia promote peace and prosperity and deepen its democracy. Building on our current efforts, over this year and

next, our resulting support would total over \$1.6 billion.

President Pastrana's inauguration in August 1998 brought to Colombia a new spirit of hope—for deeper democracy, for broader prosperity, for an end to that country's long civil conflict. But increased drug production and trafficking, coupled with a serious economic recession and sustained violence, have put that progress in peril.

President Pastrana has responded with a bold agenda—Plan Colombia. It provides a solid, multifaceted strategy that the United States should support with substantial assistance. We have a compelling national interest in reducing the flow of cocaine and heroin to our shores and in promoting peace, democracy, and economic growth in Colombia and the region. Given the magnitude of the drug trafficking problem and their current economic difficulties, neither the Government of Colombia nor its neighbors can carry the full burden alone.

In fiscal year 2000, much of our support will be focused on a one-time infusion of funds to help boost Colombia's interdiction and eradication capabilities, particularly in the south.

The package will also include assistance for economic development, protection of human rights, and judicial reform.

Our bilateral aid to Colombia will be supplemented by multilateral agencies. The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank are considering hundreds of millions of dollars in loans for Colombia next year. The IMF has already pledged a \$2.7 billion extended fund facility to help jumpstart the economy. And we will also continue to encourage our allies to assist Colombia.

The obstacles to a better future for Colombia are substantial. We expect it will require years before the full benefits of Plan Colombia are felt. But I believe that with our support and that of other donors, Plan Colombia can soon accelerate Colombia's nascent economic recovery. Over the longer haul, we can expect to see more effective drug eradication and increased interdiction of illicit drug shipments.

Strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia, and fighting the drug trade there,

is in our fundamental national interest. So, with President Pastrana and with our Congress, we must and we will intensify this vital work.

**Remarks at a Reception for
Representative Sheila Jackson
Lee in Houston, Texas**

January 11, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, let me say I am delighted to be here and delighted to see such a large crowd. I keep reading in the Washington press that I am a lame duck, whatever that is. *[Laughter]* But I think what it means is that someday you show up, and no one else does. *[Laughter]* So it's delightful to see you here.

Let me say, I am also profoundly grateful to Jenard and Gail for opening their magnificent home to us tonight. And I did try to come once before and was unable to do so. So, Gail, I'm glad your mother came twice. Thank you, Ida. And I'm glad you hugged me and kissed me. I feel much better now. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Mayor Brown for being here. He has done a superb job for Houston. I'm very proud of Lee Brown. You know, he was our drug czar in the national administration before he got elected mayor. He proved that there was life after Washington. *[Laughter]* And I hope it's catching. *[Laughter]* I'm very proud of him.

I want to thank Lloyd and B.A. Bentsen for being here, and I don't want anybody to forget that this great economic recovery started on Lloyd Bentsen's watch and started before I ever took the oath of office, when Lloyd Bentsen announced we were going to cut the deficit by \$500 billion. The stock market boomed. Interest rates went down—*[inaudible]*.

One of us needs to show respect for the other. You know, the other night they had this big dinner honoring Lloyd, and I called in, and I lathered all over him and said all these incredible things. And then I got off the phone and he said, "Now, who was that guy again?" *[Laughter]*

I want to thank my friend Billie Carr, who taught me a lot of what I know about politics.

I love you and will always love you all my life. Thank you for being here. And thank you, Kathy, for singing. And I'd also—I've got something special I want to say about Sheila Jackson Lee, but I will introduce it by saying I'm glad Goldie Hawn came all the way from California to be with us tonight.

And here's what the relevance of this evening is to me. I was nominated for President, effectively, on June 2, 1992, because I won the California, Ohio, and New Jersey primaries, and numerically had enough votes to win the nomination on the first ballot. Now some of you may remember there was a guy from Texas named Perot who was also running, who was the rage of the moment. And the next day—this was supposed to be a happy night in my life, but that night on television and the next day, all the news stories were: Clinton wins the nomination, but he's dead meat; he can't be elected President, he's running third, everybody really wants to vote for Perot.

So it was not the happiest election evening headquarters we had in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel—the old Biltmore downtown. And everybody I knew was around there feeling sorry for themselves. I thought it was pretty good. After all, I had gotten nominated, and I figured we had a few months to fix it.

And Goldie Hawn and Chevy Chase showed up to tell me that they didn't think we were going to finish third. I have never forgotten it. I never will. I thank you for being here tonight. Thank you.

Now what's that got to do with Sheila Jackson Lee? A lot, because Sheila Jackson Lee also sticks. You know, I hate to tell you this. Sometimes we make jokes about you behind your back. *[Laughter]* Why? Because you have one pace—fast; and one pressure level—hard. *[Laughter]*

But let me tell you, this Representative from Congress—and I know a little something about the burdens that are imposed on Members of Congress, so let me say I'm delighted that Elwin and Jason are here tonight. And I want to thank them for the contribution they have made to the welfare of the people of this congressional district and the people of this country, because it is very difficult to have a family and serve in Congress.